

The '211 patent discloses a security system that includes sensors 124, 126 connected to a control unit 120. The control unit 120 controls operation of a local alarm annunciator 142 and a test annunciator 176. The system of the '211 patent provides a distinctive indication that the security system is in a test mode for testing operation of the sensors. The distinctive indication includes audible and/or visual indications that a test sequence has been initiated, followed by testing of the system during the test sequence, with test results being indicated by altering the format of the audible or visible signal (see Abstract).

Contrary to the Examiner's view, the sensors 124, 126 of the '211 patent are not notification appliances. Rather, the sensors 124, 126 are similar to the detectors D shown in FIG. 1 of the present application. Further, contrary to the Examiner's view, a test annunciation is not applied to the sensors 124, 126 of the '211 patent.

The '211 patent is concerned with constantly reminding building occupants that the system is in the test mode. To accomplish this, the system of the '211 patent provides "a highly audible and/or visible indication that the system has been placed in the test mode . . . in the form of a signal transmitted throughout the area under test" (column 2, lines 6-9)(emphasis added).

The '211 patent is also concerned with ensuring that the output of a sensor is being communicated to the central control unit. For this concern, the system of the '211 patent changes or alters the highly audible and/or visible reminder signal to give the individual conducting a walk test "an indication not only that the sensor is operating to detect his presence but also the fact that the resulting alarm condition signal has, in fact, been transmitted back to an operating control unit" (column 2, lines 23-30).

In contrast, the present invention of base Claims 1 and 5 relates to an alarm method and system in which the normal operation of notification appliances can be tested by causing a test status indicator at one or more selected notification appliances to be operated for subsequent verification by a technician or operator and without operating its associated alarm indicator so as to avoid disrupting the building occupants. That is, the proper operation of the notification appliances is being tested. Such verification can include, for example, checking that the programming of alarm indicators is correct or troubleshooting a faulty notification appliance. Further, the test status indicator of the present invention is not at a system controller but rather is at the appliance itself to be used to aid a technician during testing and verification of the system.

There is no disclosure in the '211 patent relating to verification of plural notification appliances that can communicate with, and be selected by, a system controller for operation as

claimed in base Claims 1 and 5. Rather, at most the '211 patent discloses a single alarm annunciator 142 and a single test annunciator 176 which are used for alarm and test annunciation for all the sensors 124, 126 in common. Thus, the '211 patent does not disclose the recited (Claim 1):

selecting at the system controller which notification appliances to operate; and communicating from the system controller to each selected notification appliance an instruction to operate its associated test status indicator for verification without operating its associated alarm indicator so as to avoid disrupting the building occupants.

The "loud periodic beeping sound which is audible throughout the protected facility so that anybody within the protected facility will recognize that the system is under test" (column 2, lines 11-14) of the '211 patent teaches away from the present invention of base Claims 1 and 5 which is directed to avoiding disrupting the building occupants during testing of plural notification appliances. Therefore, base Claims 1 and 5 are believed to be patentable over the '211 patent.

Base Claims 14 and 17 are directed to a test mode which uses a locally-activated switch at a notification appliance. By providing a magnetic or other locally-activated switch in each notification appliance, a technician can activate one appliance at a time (typically for a brief interval), rather than, as has been the convention, causing all of the appliances on a notification circuit to operate while the technician walks through the building to check that all of the appliances are functioning.

The '211 patent discloses a test button or switch 160 that is located at control unit 120 which places the entire system into a test mode.

As with the test status indicator noted above, the test switch of the present invention of base Claims 14 and 17 is not at the system controller but rather is at the notification appliance itself for use by a technician during testing and verification of that individual notification appliance. The Examiner has not cited any portion of the '211 patent that teaches or suggests a test switch located at a notification appliance. Therefore, base Claims 14 and 17 are believed to be patentable over the '211 patent.

Applicants believe that the claims are not taught or suggested by the '211 patent and respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection of the claims.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (781) 861-6240.

Respectfully submitted,

HAMILTON, BROOK, SMITH & REYNOLDS, P.C.

By

Timothy J. Meagher
Registration No. 39,302
Telephone (781) 861-6240
Facsimile (781) 861-9540

Lexington, Massachusetts 02421-4799

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